



2011 AmeriCorps State Grant Application 'Formula' Request for Proposals

Thank you for your interest in an AmeriCorps State Formula Grant. This packet contains information pertaining to the Request for Proposal (RFP) process for 2011 AmeriCorps grants funded by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) through the Montana Governor's Office of Community Service (OCS). The Montana Commission on Community Service serves as the body to review and recommend funding to the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Funding Purpose: to maximize the power of service and volunteering to improve lives in communities across the country. In the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009, Congress directed CNCS to focus AmeriCorps and National Service in areas where service can make a major impact, including improving education; energy conservation; the health of all Americans; economic opportunity for economically vulnerable individuals; increasing service by and for veterans; and providing disaster services. The purpose of these grants is to establish AmeriCorps programs in local communities to help address unmet needs in these areas.

Applicants should read all application materials, including attachments and linked documents, and attend the technical assistance call (AmeriCorps 101) prior to submitting any documents to the Governor's Office of Community Service.

2011 AmeriCorps State Grant Application Instructions from CNCS:

<http://serve.mt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/2011-AmeriCorps-State-Application-Instructions-CNCS-Updated-10.25.10.pdf>

Montana AmeriCorps State Formula Grant Process:

If a program currently funded through the formula stream applies for competitive funding and is approved by the Montana Commission on Community Service (Commission) but is not awarded a grant by CNCS their application will automatically be added to the pool of formula applicants. If a competitive applicant was not approved by the full Commission for funding or if a Montana program applies for National Direct funding and they are not approved by CNCS and they wish to be considered for formula funding they must go through the entire formula grant process.

Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity (NOFO) - Attachment A

Applicants must complete the following information to be eligible:

1. Letter of Intent - Attachment B
2. Readiness Self-Assessment (New Applicants) - Attachment C

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3. Send both documents electronically to the Governor's Office of Community Service at serve@mt.gov to be considered for an AmeriCorps Grant.
4. The Governor's Office of Community Service will contact you confirming receipt of your letter of intent and self-assessment. If you do not hear from us within 24 hours please call at 406-444-9077 to confirm the information was received.
5. The Governor's Office of Community Service will invite applicants with a strong Letter of Intent and a strong Readiness Self-Assessments, and who address CNCS National Focus Areas and State Expectations to continue with the application process.

Applicants asked to continue with the RFP process must complete the following:

6. The Full AmeriCorps State Grant Application in eGrants using the [Application Instructions](#) from CNCS
 - a. Submit the Application via eGrants to OCS
7. MOU's and documentation of previous fundraising efforts (New Applicants)
 - a. Send electronically to the Governor's Office of Community Service at serve@mt.gov
8. Cover Letter - Attachment D
 - a. Send electronically to the Governor's Office of Community Service at serve@mt.gov
9. The Governor's Office of Community Service will contact you confirming receipt of the application in eGrants, Cover Letter, and MOU's and Fundraising Documentation. If you do not hear from us within 24 hours please call at 406-444-9077 to confirm the information was received

This funding process is for AmeriCorps State 'Formula' Grant applications. Formula funds are granted to state commissions and subgranted to AmeriCorps programs operating in that state. Applicants compete in the spring at the state level for formula funds. The application period for the 2011 AmeriCorps State 'Competitive' grant year has closed, the 2012 grant year cycle will be announced in the fall of 2011.

Note: all grant awards are subject to the availability of federal funds.

Appeals Process for the Montana Commission on Community Service and the Governor's Office of Community Service:

<http://serve.mt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Appeals-Process-Updated-10.18.10.pdf>

For further questions, please contact the Governor's Office of Community Service at:
P.O. Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620 Phone: 406-444-9077 Fax: 406-444-4418 Email: serve@mt.gov



2011 AmeriCorps State Grant Application Formula Timeline

Feb. 23	2011 AmeriCorps State Grant Request for Proposal Released and Posted Online (Application Instructions and Materials)
Mar. 2	Technical Assistance Call for all Applicants – AmeriCorps 101 Training 2pm MST – Conference Call (641)715-3620 – Code #937749
Mar. 16	Letter of Intent (all applicants) and Readiness Self-Assessment (new applicants only) due to the Governor's Office of Community Service (OCS) by 5pm
Mar. 23	Technical Assistance Call for Applicants - RFP, Instructions, and eGrants 2pm MST – Conference Call (641)715-3620 – Code #937749
Apr. 27	Applications due in eGrants by 5pm Cover Letter (all applicants) and MOU's and Documentation of Previous Fundraising Efforts (new applicants) due to the Governor's Office of Community Service by 5pm
May 13	Applications Sent to the Montana Commission on Community Service Grant Review Workgroup and Outside Reviewer
May 25-26	In-Person Interviews of Selected Applicants with the Grant Review Workgroup and OCS
May 27	Grant Review Workgroup's Recommendations Sent to Full Commission
Jun. 10	Full Commission Meeting (Video Conference) to Vote on the Grant Review Workgroup Funding Recommendations
Jun. 15	OCS Notifies All Applicants of Commission Funding Recommendations and Gives Technical Feedback
Jun. 22	Final Revised Applications due in eGrants by 5pm
Jul. 6	Staff Submits State Formula Applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)
Aug. 2011	CNCS sends out Award Notification of Formula Funding Status



Attachment A - Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity

Montana Commission on Community Service 2011 AmeriCorps State Formula Grant Application

What organizations are eligible for funding?

- ✓ Public or private nonprofit organizations
- ✓ Faith-based and other community organizations
- ✓ Institutions of higher education
- ✓ Government entities within states or territories (e.g., cities, counties)
- ✓ Indian Tribes
- ✓ Labor organizations
- ✓ Partnerships or consortia

The Montana Commission on Community Service's AmeriCorps application process begins with a Letter of Intent (Attachment B) and Readiness Self-Assessment (Attachment C) being sent to the Governor's Office of Community Service.

Once an applicant has submitted a Letter of Intent and Readiness Self-Assessment the Governor's Office of Community Service will review all and invite applicants with a strong Letter of Intent and a strong Readiness Self-Assessments, and who address CNCS National Focus Areas and State Expectations to continue with the application process.

The Governor's Office of Community Service will contact applicants confirming receipt of the Letter of Intent and Readiness Self-Assessment, if you do not hear from OCS within 24 hours please call the Governor's Office of Community Service at 406-444-9077 to confirm your information arrived.

CNCS Application Instructions

The application instructions outline the precise steps to complete a full application in eGrants*. Applicants will identify a proposed project, the community needs addressed, the activities AmeriCorps Members will accomplish, and the number of AmeriCorps Members requested. Applicants will also describe their organizational capacity for administering an AmeriCorps program and identify the source(s) of necessary program support, including a required match.

*The Corporation for National and Community Service's web-based system.

Overview of AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is a national service program that provides opportunities for citizens to serve their country in local communities. Programs design service activities for a team of AmeriCorps Members, serving full-time or part-time, to join a local program and provide



specific, intensive community services such as: tutoring students, teaching community residents about issues directly affecting them, and a wide variety of other services to strengthen communities. Members mobilize community volunteers and strengthen the capacity of the organizations where they serve.

Grant awards spans a period of time anywhere from one to three years; all grants are subject to availability of federal funds. Three year grants must be renewed annually with a continuation application in the current funding stream. All grants are subject to performance reviews. AmeriCorps is a program funded by the U. S. Congress under the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number 94.006. The national public/private partnership supporting AmeriCorps is the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). CNCS receives AmeriCorps program funding from Congress and awards funding to state commissions and organizations, such as the Governor's Office of Community Service, to grant and oversee AmeriCorps programs in their state.

Note: all grant awards are subject to the availability of federal funds.

On April 21, 2009, President Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, the most sweeping expansion of national service in a generation. This landmark law not only expands service opportunities, but also focuses the service investment on producing outcomes on key issues; expanding opportunities to serve; building the capacity of individuals, nonprofits, and communities to succeed; and encouraging innovative approaches to solving problems. For more information about starting up an AmeriCorps State program and/or National AmeriCorps programs, please visit www.americorps.gov or www.nationalservice.gov.

Governor's Office of Community Service

The Governor's Office of Community Service and the Montana Commission on Community Service were established in 1993 by the Montana Legislature to administer grants under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. Under the advice of the Montana Commission on Community Service, the Governor's Office of Community Service grants funds to Montana AmeriCorps and National Service programs through two competitive (Competitive and Formula Funding Streams) grant process; encourages citizens of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to engage in service; involves youth in the life and work of communities; promotes volunteerism in emergency management and preparedness; and helps to strengthen and expand volunteer opportunities for all Montanans.

Funding Priorities

In alignment with the Serve America Act, this Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity will focus AmeriCorps grant making in six Focus Areas identified by the Act and the Corporation for National and Community Service.



CNCS Focus Areas:

- ☐ Disaster Services
- ☐ Economic Opportunity
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Environmental Stewardship
- ☐ Healthy Futures
- ☐ Veterans and Military Families

The Montana Commission on Community Service identified priority areas through the State Service Plan; therefore additional consideration will be given within the state to programs that address one or more of the Montana Initiatives.

Montana Initiatives:

- ☐ The Governor's Strategic Initiative for Clean Energy
- ☐ The Governor and First Lady's Strategic Initiative for Math and Science Education
- ☐ Expand and Promote Volunteerism in Montana

All programs operating in Montana should include all of the Montana Expectations.

Montana Expectations:

- ✓ Disability inclusion in the design and delivery of the program
- ✓ A collaborative approach to program planning, design and delivery
- ✓ Demonstrated ability to successfully administer an AmeriCorps or other federal grant
- ✓ Addressing rural, underserved or areas of extreme poverty not currently served by AmeriCorps programs

AmeriCorps Program Requirements

Meeting Community Needs

AmeriCorps engages citizens of all ages and backgrounds in helping organizations initiate, improve, or expand services to meet pressing local needs. Service activities must result in a specific, identifiable benefit or improvement that otherwise would not be provided with existing funds or volunteers, and that does not duplicate the routine function of workers or displace paid employees.

Strengthening Communities

Programs must strengthen communities, bringing together both institutions and individuals



to cooperate in effecting lasting and constructive change. Strengthening of communities is evidenced by community involvement in planning and implementation, the development of local partnerships, and the recruitment of volunteers.

Developing AmeriCorps Members

Through the service experience programs must help members develop their ethics and skills needed for productive, active citizenship. During the term of service, most AmeriCorps members receive a basic stipend; full-time members are eligible for health care and possibly child care benefits. Upon successful completion of their service members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that can be used for many kinds of education or to pay back student loans. Programs must also provide members with the training and knowledge necessary to perform the task required in their respective projects.

Program Design

Applicants have a great deal of flexibility to design programs that will best achieve the goals listed above. This flexibility includes the ability to target individuals of a certain age or skill level; to involve appropriate partner organizations to train, supervise, or support members; and to place members individually in projects or organize them in teams. Programs may also determine whether a full-time or part-time schedule is more appropriate to meet the program's goals.

Montana Commission on Community Service Programmatic Preference

Size

AmeriCorps State programs are not designed for organizations looking for one or two AmeriCorps members to serve on a particular project. AmeriCorps State programs must be large enough to achieve a demonstrable impact. In general, programs sponsoring fewer than 10 full-time members or their equivalent (e.g., 20 half-time members) will not be funded. The applicant has the flexibility to determine an appropriate service period (not to exceed 12 months with the exception of 2 year half time member) for members but should limit the number of different categories proposed.

The Montana Commission on Community Service (Commission) will give priority to applicants that integrate the program preferences. The Commission may consider other factors in selecting proposals for funding. Regardless of how well an applicant does, the Montana Commission on Community Service has the ability to select other applications for the purposes of geographic and program diversity. All funding decisions require approval by the executive director of the Governor's Office of Community Service and the Corporation for National and Community Service.



Amended by the Montana Governor's Office of Community Service (OCS)

Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity

Federal Agency Name: Corporation for National and Community Service

Funding Opportunity Title: AmeriCorps Formula Grants FY 2011

Announcement Type: Announcement issued by OCS February 23, 2011

CFDA Number: 94.006

Dates: Applications are due in eGrants April 27, 2011 by 5:00 pm MST for initial review by the Governor's Office of Community Service. The Corporation for National and Community Service will notify the Governor's Office of Community Service by August 31, 2011.

Overview: The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic participation through service and volunteering. For more than fifteen years, the Corporation—through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs—has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

In order to carry out Congress' intent and to maximize the impact of the investment in national service, the Corporation is seeking to fund programs that can demonstrate an evidence-based approach to creating community impact and solving community problems.

In the AmeriCorps State and National competition this year, the Corporation especially seeks to focus investment on national service programs that improve academic outcomes for children, youth and young adults. This focus reflects the extensive experience and past success of national service programs in education, and aligns with the reform efforts of the Department of Education. In addition, the Corporation seeks to increase its investment in programs that serve veterans and military families, or engage veterans in service.

This [*Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity \(Notice\)*](#) should be read together with the [AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR Sections 2520 – 2550](#) and the [Application Instructions](#).

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Corporation is carrying out Congress's intent by targeting AmeriCorps State and National funding in these six focus areas, and is developing strategic objectives for each. In accordance with the Act, through this Notice and its other activities, the Corporation seeks to:

- Direct the power of national service to solve a common set of challenges.
- Expand opportunities for all Americans to serve.
- Build the enduring capacity of individuals, organizations and communities to effectively use service and volunteering to solve community problems.
- Embrace innovative solutions that work.

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations to recruit, train, and manage AmeriCorps members who address community needs. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who is enrolled in an



approved national service position and engages in community service. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust.

AmeriCorps State and National grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to eligible organizations that identify a problem(s) and persuasively demonstrate how deploying AmeriCorps members and community volunteers will produce significant impact in solving the identified problem(s).

Focus Areas and National Performance Measures

As in 2010, in the 2011 grant competition the Corporation expects to invest a significant amount of available funding to programs working in the six Focus Areas of Disaster Services, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, Opportunity, and Veterans and Military Families.

In particular, as noted above, the Corporation seeks to target its grant making in the Education Focus Area for greater impact and increase its investment in the Focus Area of Veterans and Military Families. Accordingly, to meet these goals, the Corporation will give priority consideration to the following, in descending order of preference:

- Education programs that are focused on improving academic outcomes for children, youth, and young adults, particularly those in low-performing schools and programs that serve veterans and military families, or that include performance measures focused on engaging veterans in service (Veterans Performance Measures 2 or 5).
- Programs that opt into the national performance measure pilot.
- All other programs in the Focus Areas with self-nominated measures.

Additional preference will be given to programs that lead to member outcomes (Opportunity Performance Measures 12-17).

Continuation requests that include a request for expansion will be prioritized and given preference in the same manner.

Applicants proposing programs in the priority areas are not guaranteed funding. The Corporation will pursue a balanced portfolio across the Focus Areas, and other considerations outlined below in Section VI. What are the goals of the review and selection process? Brief descriptions of the six Focus Areas follow:

Disaster Services:

Grants in the Disaster Services Focus Area will help communities with disaster mitigation, preparation, response and recovery. In order to be considered aligned with this Focus Area, applicants must submit self-identified performance measures that demonstrate community and member impacts as they relate to one or more of the functional aspects of disaster services. The application instructions include definitions and examples for each of the functional areas. The measures identified by successful applicants through this *Notice* will inform the development of national disaster services performance measures in future years.

Education:

Grants in the Education Focus Area will include programs that seek to contribute to the number of students who graduate from high school and college or university. In order to achieve that goal, the Corporation seeks to increase its investment in national service programs that improve academic outcomes for young children, youth, and young adults, particularly those in the lowest-performing schools.



Specifically, the Corporation seeks research- and evidence-based programs that help children and youth prepare for school; perform at grade-level; graduate from high school ready for college, work, and life; and succeed in college and university through academic engagement and civic participation.

Environmental Stewardship:

Grants in the Environmental Stewardship Focus Area will include programs that protect human health and the health of ecosystems by conserving natural resources and restoring the nation's air, water, and land. Environmental Stewardship programs may include activities that encourage organizations and individuals to use energy efficiently and utilize cost-effective renewable energy technologies; minimize waste disposal; restore watersheds and aquatic ecosystems; improve at-risk public use lands; restore critical wildlife habitat; increase soil stabilization and quality; mitigate the environmental consequences of disasters; and promote environmental sustainability.

Healthy Futures:

Grants in the Healthy Futures Focus Area will meet health needs within communities including access to care, aging in place, and addressing childhood obesity. Access to care is broadly defined and may include health insurance, culturally appropriate health care interventions, transportation, language translation, access to disease and disability prevention, health promotion initiatives, health literacy and efforts to address health disparities. Grants may support older adults, homebound individuals and disabled individuals with activities such as food delivery, transportation or other services that allow them to live independently, including evidence-based programs supported by other partner agencies such as the U. S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Veterans Affairs. The Corporation seeks to fund programs that target risk factors for childhood obesity, including poor nutrition and physical inactivity, and that reflect the recommendations of the National Prevention Council and the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity.

Opportunity:

Grants in the Opportunity Focus Area will meet the needs of economically vulnerable Americans, their families and their communities. Opportunity programs may include activities that assist individuals and families that are homeless or at risk of homelessness; provide financial literacy training and tools designed to improve financial security; and expand employment possibilities. Opportunity programs include those that engage economically vulnerable Americans as AmeriCorps members leading to positive employment and/or educational outcomes. The Corporation will also support programs undertake community-based strategies to redevelop local areas that are struggling with under-investment and other barriers to economic opportunity.

Veterans and Military Families

Grants in the Veterans and Military Families Focus Area will meet the needs of veterans and family members of active duty and deployed military personnel. Veterans and Military Families programs may include activities in the areas of health, education and economic opportunity, including the elimination of veteran homelessness, educational programs for children in military families, and economic opportunities for military spouses and veterans. The Corporation is also interested in supporting programs that target disadvantaged, homeless, or formerly homeless veterans and programs that align with the efforts of the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Veterans Affairs, Labor, Defense, and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness.

National Performance Measure Pilot:

In 2011, the Corporation will implement the second year of the National Performance Measures Pilot. National performance measures allow the Corporation to demonstrate the aggregated impact of AmeriCorps programs. While use of national performance measures remains optional in 2011, new and



recompeting applicants are strongly encouraged to use them in planning programming. Applications that include national performance measures will be a funding priority in 2011. National performance measures are described in detail in Section VIII., below.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

How much funding is available?

Funding is subject to the availability of federal appropriations for fiscal year 2011. For fiscal year 2010 the Corporation for National and Community Service allocated \$615,467 in funding for the Montana AmeriCorps Formula Grant cycle. Based on recent expression of interest, the Governor's Office of Community Service anticipates this will be a highly competition AmeriCorps grant cycle.

What organizations are eligible for funding?

Public or private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations; institutions of higher education; government entities within states or territories (e.g., cities, counties); Indian Tribes; labor organizations; and partnerships or consortia are eligible. Intermediaries are encouraged to apply. The Corporation encourages organizations that have never received funding from the Corporation or AmeriCorps to apply for the grants described in this *Notice*. Organizations that have been convicted of a Federal crime are disqualified from receiving the assistance described in this *Notice*.

An Indian Tribe is defined as a federally recognized Indian Tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Native village, Regional Corporation, or Village Corporation, as defined under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. § 1602), that the United States Government determines is eligible for special programs and services provided under federal law to Indians because of their status as Indians. Indian Tribes also include tribal organizations controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by one of the entities described above.

III. WHAT ARE THE CATEGORIES OF AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL GRANTS?

The categories of AmeriCorps State and National grants are described below. The Corporation will not provide more than one grant for the same project in one fiscal year. Also see the AmeriCorps State and National Fit Finder to decide which type of grant aligns with the proposed project (<http://www.americorps.gov/fitfinder/>).

State Competitive and Formula

These grants are awarded to organizations that are proposing a project that will operate in only one state and that are put forward to the Corporation by the Montana Commission on Community Service. Applicants are eligible to apply for funding for members' living allowance and program costs.

For a listing of Corporation grant types visit:

http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/apply/national_apply.asp

IV. WHAT ARE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THESE GRANTS?

Program requirements, including requirements on match, are specified in the AmeriCorps regulations and summarized below.

What are the matching requirements for these grants?

Cost Reimbursement Grants

A first-time successful applicant is required to match at 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in 45 CFR 2521.60.



Section 121(e)(5) of the National Community Service Act requires that programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant report the amount and source of these funds to the Corporation on the Federal Financial Report.

Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35% instead of 50% as specified in the regulations at §2521.60(b). To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Application Instructions.

What are the requirements regarding member living allowance?

The proposed budget must include a living allowance for full-time members that is between \$12,100 (minimum) and \$24,200 (maximum) per member except as noted below.

For cost-reimbursement grants, this amount must be included in the proposed budget. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to part-time members, it must comply with the maximum limits in the chart below.

Table 2: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1700	\$12,100	\$24,200
One-year Half-time	900	n/a	\$12,800
Two-year Half-time	900	n/a	\$12,800
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	\$9,600
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$6,400
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$4,300

What are the exceptions to the living allowance requirements?

Prior to September 21, 1993

If a program existed prior to the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (enacted September 21, 1993), the law does not require a living allowance. If an applicant chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement of \$12,100, but not the maximum requirement of \$24,200.

What is the Maximum Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)?

Applicants requesting more than \$13,300 per MSY will not be considered for funding.

Continuation and re-competing grantees requesting a higher cost per MSY than in the previous year must include a compelling rationale for this increased cost in the Budget Adequacy/Cost Effectiveness section of the application narrative. This applies even if the increased cost per MSY is less than the maximum.

What are the member enrollment requirements for existing grantees?

The Corporation expects grantees to enroll the full number of members included in their grant award. Enrollment rates have a direct bearing on the number of slots and the size of awards approved in the continuation and re-compete processes. Applicants that do not fully enroll are likely to receive a decrease in funding. Continuation and re-competing grantees that haven't achieved full enrollment in the previous year must provide an explanation in their application and describe a corrective action plan.

What are the member retention requirements for existing grantees?



The Corporation recognizes retention rates may vary among equally effective programs depending on the program model. The Corporation expects grantees to pursue the highest retention rate possible. Retention rates will have a direct bearing on the number of slots and the size of awards approved in the continuation and re-compete processes. Applicants that do not retain members are likely to receive a decrease in funding. Continuation and recompeting grantees that haven't achieved full retention in the most recently completed program year must provide an explanation in their application and describe a corrective action plan.

What is the amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award for FY 2011?

AmeriCorps members serving in programs funded with 2011 dollars who successfully complete a term of service will receive an Education Award from the National Service Trust of \$5,550 for a year of full-time service, with correspondingly smaller awards for less-than-full-time service. The amount of the Education Award is determined on the basis of the Pell Grant award. A member has up to seven years after the term of service has ended to use the award.

Table 4: Term of Service and Education

Award Term of Service	Minimum # of Hours	Education Award
Full Time	1700	\$5,550
One-Year Half Time	900	\$2,775
Two-Year Half Time	900	\$2,775
Reduced Half Time	675	\$2,114
Quarter Time	450	\$1,468
Minimum Time	300	\$1,175

V. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

How to Apply

Organizations that propose to operate only in Montana must apply through the Montana Commission on Community Service and the Governor's Office of Community Service. Indian Tribes may apply through the Montana Commission on Community Service or directly to the Corporation.

Universal Identifier

Applications must include a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and register with the Central Contractor's Registry (CCR). [The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number.](#)

DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

The website indicates a 24-hour e-mail turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers; however, the [Corporation suggests registering at least 30 days in advance of the application due date.](#)

Expedited DUNS numbers may be obtained by following instructions found here:

<http://smallbusiness.dnb.com/establish-your-business/12334338-1.html>.

CCR is the primary registrant database for the U.S. Federal Government. CCR collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data in support of Federal agency contracts, grant awards, cooperative agreements, and other forms of federal assistance. All grant recipients are required to maintain a valid registration, which must be renewed annually.

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The Corporation urges applicants that are not already registered with the CCR to begin the registration process immediately in order to avoid any delays in submitting applications. Applicants must have a DUNS number in order to register with the CCR. It typically takes 3-5 days to finalize CCR registration. To register online go to www.bpn.gov/CCR.

Content and Form of Application Submission

Submitting in eGrants

The Corporation requires that all applicants submit applications electronically via the Corporation's web-based application system, eGrants. Applications must be submitted in eGrants to the Governor's Office of Community Service by April 27, 2011 at 5 pm MST in order to be considered. The Governor's Office of Community Service reserves the right to extend the submission deadline.

The Corporation recommends that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the document into eGrants no later than 10 days before the deadline.

Contact the eGrants Help Desk at 888-677-7849 if a problem arises while creating an account, preparing, or submitting an application. Be prepared to provide the application ID. eGrants Help Desk hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET Monday through Friday.

If technical issues will prevent an applicant from submitting an application on time, please contact the eGrants Help Desk prior to the deadline to explain the technical issue and receive a ticket number. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, the applicant must notify the Governor's Office of Community Service (call 406-444-9077 or e-mail serve@mt.gov) and continue working with the eGrants Help Desk to submit via eGrants.

Late Applications

The Montana Commission on Community Service and the Governor's Office of Community Service will not accept late applications.

If extenuating circumstances make the use of eGrants impossible, applicants may send a hard copy of the application to the address below in Section IX. via overnight carrier. All deadlines and requirements in this *Notice* apply to hard copy applications. Hard copy applications must include a cover letter detailing the circumstances that make it impossible to submit via e-Grants.

Supplementary materials such as videos, brochures, letters of support, or any other item not requested in these application instructions will not be reviewed by the Montana Commission on Community Service and the Governor's Office of Community Service nor will they be returned.

Character Limits

In eGrants, applicants will enter text for

- Executive Summary: Maximum 500 characters (a brief paragraph, about a quarter-page). Executive summaries of all compliant applications will be published on the Corporation website following grant notifications.
- Section A. Program Design,
- Section B. Organizational Capability,
- Section C. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy, and
- Section D. Evaluation Plan.



You may not exceed 50,000 characters, or about 25 double spaced pages, in Sections A, B, C, and D. *The character count includes spaces and punctuation.* Keep in mind that Executive Summaries of all compliant applications will be published following the deadline.

Equal Opportunity Survey

Applicants must complete the Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants in eGrants before submitting application.

Documentation of Match

All programs applying as new applicants for AmeriCorps Formula Grants are required to submit a signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) from each outside organization contributing either in-kind or cash match. MOUs should be submitted to the Governor's Office of Community Service on the letterhead of the organization contributing match. For match contributions coming from other fundraising activities documentation should be provided showing the effectiveness of fundraising in previous years.

VI. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

What are the Selection Criteria?

Each application must clearly describe a project that will effectively deploy AmeriCorps members to solve a significant community problem and respond to the following criteria.

1. Staff Assessment (40%)

The grading of this section will be based on an OCS staff prepared document outlining the grantees performance in these scoring areas:

- Program strength/weaknesses and compliment to the state service plan
- A demonstrated community need, service activities, and a unique concept that connects the community need with the proposed AmeriCorps service
- Organizational structure, capacity for managing an AmeriCorps program, and a clear understanding of National Service
- Clear, reasonable budget, and incorporated CNCS mandated program changes
- Provided MOUs for organizations contributing match and or evidence of successful past fundraising efforts (New Applicants Only)

Applicants that have previously received grant funding through the Montana Commission on Community Service and the Governor's Office of Community Service will be further graded on a number of criteria not contained within the grant application.

- Fiscal Compliance: Overall match percent, cost per MSY, ability to meet match
- Programmatic Compliance: Enrollment and retention rates, performance measures and progress toward impact success
- Correction of compliance findings
- Reporting: Timeliness of member enrollments and exits, performance meeting reporting deadlines

2. Program Design (30%)

In assessing Program Design, reviewers will examine the degree to which the applicant clearly describes and convincingly links four major elements: (1) the problem(s) identified, (2) the solution that will be carried out by AmeriCorps members and community volunteers, (3) the ways in which AmeriCorps members are particularly well-suited to deliver the solution, and (4) the anticipated outcomes.

Specifically, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Provides persuasive evidence that the identified problem exists in the targeted community(ies).
- Demonstrates that individuals recruited and selected to be AmeriCorps members will:
 - Have the appropriate backgrounds, qualifications and skills to succeed.
 - Receive orientation, training, and supervision to ensure impact in the community.



- Provides evidence that the program will provide AmeriCorps members a powerful service experience that leads to continued engagement in active civic participation.
- Makes the case that engaging AmeriCorps members is a highly effective means of solving the identified community problem(s).
- Describes, to the extent possible based on evidence, how the activities in which AmeriCorps members and volunteers will engage will have a measurable impact on the identified community problem(s).

If a new applicant is already working on the problem(s) identified in the application, the applicant should describe these efforts and impact to date and describe how the proposed use of AmeriCorps members will add value, i.e., be more effective than what is currently being implemented, or enhance existing efforts.

3. Organizational Capability (15%)

Reviewers will assess the extent to which:

- The organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan, implement and evaluate the proposed program.
- The organization has secured, or describes an effective plan for securing, the financial and in-kind resources necessary to support program implementation and to demonstrate community stakeholder support.
- Multi-state applicants have consulted with state and territory service commissions to ensure non-duplication and coordination of Corporation resources.
- Current or previous AmeriCorps grantees filled the member positions they were awarded and retained the AmeriCorps members they enrolled or have provided an explanation for less than 100% enrollment and retention.
- The organization has a well-developed plan for expanding on its success through expansion or assuring adaptation of its program model by other organizations.

4. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (15%)

For cost-reimbursement grants, reviewers will assess the extent to which:

- The budget is clear, reasonable, cost-effective, and in alignment with the program narrative.
- The requested funds do not exceed the maximum cost per Member Service Year (MSY), or for existing programs, have not increased over previous years.
- [New applications for Formula Grants should include funding in the budget for travel to Helena for an AmeriCorps Orientation Training by OCS.](#)

The Montana Commission on Community Service identified priority areas through the State Service Plan; therefore additional consideration will be given to programs that address one or more of the Montana Initiatives. All programs operating in Montana should include all of the Montana Expectations.

What are the goals of the review and selection process?

The Montana Commission on Community Service's review and selection process is designed to:

- Give every eligible application full and fair consideration.
- Select a high-quality, well-balanced portfolio of programs that will engage AmeriCorps members in solving pressing problems in communities across Montana.

The Commission's assessment of applications involves a wide range of factors and considerations. In addition, the Grant Review Workgroup will apply their experience and expertise in evaluating applications. In the end, the review and selection process will produce a balanced set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and selection factors described in this *Notice*.



Specifically, the review and selection process is designed to:

(1) Identify eligible applications that satisfy the following considerations:

- High-quality response to criteria articulated in this *Notice*, above.
- Priorities, in the order of preference stated in this Notice, above.
- Additional Considerations:
 - Recruitment and deployment of community volunteers to leverage impact.
 - Data on applicant history and performance.
 - Relative risk and opportunity.
- Strategic Characteristics:
 - Building capacity for individuals, nonprofits and communities to solve problems.
 - Expanding opportunities to serve; particularly for new Americans, low-income individuals, rural residents, older Americans, veterans, members of faith-based organizations, communities of color, Native Americans, and people with disabilities.
 - Embracing innovative approaches to solving problems.

(2) Compile a balanced portfolio based on the following characteristics:

- Geographic representation.
- Equitable treatment of
 - Rural and urban communities.
 - Small and large programs.
- Involvement of underserved and economically disadvantaged communities.

What are the stages in the review and selection process?

1. Compliance Review

The Governor's Office of Community Service staff will review all applications to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness requirements. Applications that are submitted by eligible organizations, submitted by the deadline, and that are complete, will advance to Internal Review.

2. Internal Review

The Montana Commission on Community Service Grant Review Workgroup will assess Staff Assessment; Program Design, particularly focusing on the proposed solution(s) to the identified community problem(s), appropriateness of national service as a solution, and potential quality of the member experience; Organizational Capability; and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy.

3. Full Commission Review

The findings of the Grant Review Workgroup will be presented to the full Montana Commission on Community Service for funding and application ranking decisions. The Commission will select the final portfolio based on Grant Review Workgroup recommendation, considering overall quality, priorities, balancing characteristics, additional considerations, and strategic characteristics listed above. A decision by the full commission to fund the application (moving it onto the next level) does not guarantee a grant award.

4. Internal Clarification and Technical Feedback

Following funding and application ranking decisions by the full Montana Commission on Community Service, some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information or corrections. Clarification information and corrections will be made before the application is sent to the Corporation for National and Community Service for their review and post review quality control. A request for clarification and or corrections does not guarantee a grant award.



5. Post Review Quality Control (Quality Control)

Quality Control is designed to ensure that every eligible application receives full and fair consideration in the review process. After Corporation reviewers complete their assessment, CNCS staff will review the results to determine whether any applications should receive a Quality Control assessment. This additional level of review may be used for:

- Applications ranked first by a state commission that received low scores in External (Corporation) Review.
- Applications for which there are significant panel anomalies.
- Applications submitted by high-performing current grantees that received a low rating in Corporation peer review.

Applications identified for additional assessment will be reviewed by an external Corporation Quality Control reviewer. The Quality Control reviewer provides an assessment of the application's key strengths and weaknesses, and compares his or her findings to that of the original panel.

What feedback will applicants receive?

Following grant awards, each applicant will receive the results of the review process as pertaining to their application.

Will the priorities also be used in making decisions regarding continuation expansion requests?

Yes. Requests for continuation expansions will be assessed using the same priorities as the new and recompetite applications.

How long will the selection and review process take?

Processing and selecting applications for funding will require approximately four months.

VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

When will grants be awarded?

The Corporation will award grants following the grant selection announcement. We anticipate the final announcement of grants awarded in early August

What documents govern the grant?

The AmeriCorps regulations and grant provisions are incorporated in the Notice of Grant Award. The Notice of Grant Award incorporates the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant.

What is the Project/Award Period?

The Corporation generally makes grant awards for three years, with funding in annual increments. Grantees will be eligible for continuation funding in the second and third year contingent on the availability of appropriations, compliance, and satisfactory performance. [The project start date may not occur prior to the date the Corporation awards the grant. AmeriCorps members may not begin service prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period as designated in the grant award. A program may not certify any hours a member serves prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period.](#)

What are the reporting requirements for these grants?

Grantees are required to provide bi-annual performance reports, monthly expense reports, quarterly federal financial reports (FFR), and an internal or external evaluation report as required by the AmeriCorps regulations §§2522.500-2522.540 and §§2522.700-2522.740.



If applicants receive an award, they will be required to report at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over \$25,000 and may be required to report on executive compensation for the organization and for their subgrantees. Applicants must have the necessary systems in place to collect and report this information. See 2 C.F.R. Part 170 for more information and to determine how these requirements apply.

Disaster Funding

The Corporation reserves the right to re-focus program dollars in the event of disaster or other compelling need for service.

VIII. NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

In December 2009, the Corporation released national performance measures within the following focus areas in order to aggregate the results of similar programs and demonstrate the impact of AmeriCorps services. For additional information on national performance measures visit:

<http://nationalserviceresources.org/national-performance-measures/detailed-background>

EDUCATION FOCUS AREA

Tutoring Programs must select Measures ED1, and ED2, and then at least one measure from ED5-ED11 or ED26.

Teacher Corps must select Measures ED1 and ED2 and Measures ED12-ED 14 and Measures ED16-ED17. Measures ED 15, ED 18 and ED 19 are optional Teacher Corps measures.

Education Programs other than tutoring, Teacher Corps, mentoring, or early childhood programs must select measures ED1 and ED2, and then at least one measure from ED5-ED11 or ED26.

- ED1 Number of students who start in an AmeriCorps education program.
- ED2 Number of students who complete participation in an AmeriCorps education program.

Mentoring Programs must select Measures ED3A, ED4A, and then at least one measure from ED5-ED11 or ED26.

- ED3A Number of disadvantaged youth/mentor matches that are commenced by the AmeriCorps program.
- ED4A Number of disadvantaged youth/mentor matches that were sustained by the AmeriCorps program for at least the required time period.
- ED5 Number of students with improved academic performance, including on-time course completion.
- ED6 Number of youth who have improved their school attendance over the course of the AmeriCorps program's involvement with the student.
- ED7 Number of students with no or decreased disciplinary referrals and suspensions over the course of the AmeriCorps program's involvement.
- ED8 Number of youth with decreased substance abuse, arrest, or gang involvement.
- ED9 Number of students graduating from high school on time with a diploma, or acquiring a GED.
- ED10 Number of students entering post-secondary institutions.
- ED11 Number of students earning a post-secondary degree.

Teacher Corps must select Measures ED12-ED 14 and Measures ED16-ED17. Measures ED 15, ED 18 and ED 19 are optional Teacher Corps measures.



- ED12 Number of AmeriCorps members who begin serving as teachers through a Teacher Corps program.
- ED13 Number of AmeriCorps members who completed serving as teachers through a Teacher Corps program.
- ED14 Number of individuals teaching in high need schools
- ED15 Number of students in AmeriCorps teacher classrooms with improved academic performance.
- ED16 Number of individuals teaching in schools in the year after term of service.
- ED17 Number of teachers remaining in the education field, but not teaching in a school (school support staff, school administration, district administration policy, education nonprofits, etc.) after their term of service.
- ED18 Number of teachers who have had a positive impact on student learning as determined by observation-based assessments of teacher performance.
- ED19 Number of individuals receiving certification to teach in schools after their term of service.

Early Childhood Programs must choose measures ED20 and ED21 and then at least one measure from ED22-ED25.

- ED20 Number of children who start in an AmeriCorps early childhood education program.
- ED21 Number of children who complete participation in an AmeriCorps early childhood education program.
- ED22 Number of children accessing high quality early childhood education programs.
- ED23 Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of social and emotional development.
- ED24 Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of literacy skills.
- ED25 Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of numeracy (math) skills.

Tutoring Programs, mentoring programs and other education programs except Teacher Corps or early childhood programs must select at least one measure from ED5-ED11 or ED26.

- ED26 Number of students acquiring a GED.

HEALTHY FUTURES FOCUS AREA

Applicants must select at least one of the measures (H1-H8) that matches their program model.

Applicants must develop their own aligned outcome measures.

- H1 Number of individuals who are uninsured, economically disadvantaged, medically underserved, or living in rural areas utilizing preventive and primary health care services and programs.
- H2 Number of clients to whom information on health insurance, health care access and health benefits programs is delivered.
- H3 Number of clients enrolled in health insurance, health services, and health benefits programs.
- H4 Number of clients participating in health education programs.
- H5 Number of children and youth engaged in in-school or afterschool physical education activities with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity.
- H6 Number of children and youth receiving nutrition education with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity.
- H7 Number of clients receiving language translation services at clinics and in emergency rooms.
- H8 Number of homebound OR older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving food, transportation, or other services that allows them to live independently.



OPPORTUNITY FOCUS AREA

Applicant must select at least one measure (O1-O8) that matches their program model. (See measures O12-O17 if primary focus of program is on member development.)

- ✓ If selecting Measure O1, must also select Measure O9.
- ✓ If selecting Measure O3, must also select Measure O10.
- ✓ If selecting Measure O5, must also select Measure O11.
- ✓ If selecting Measures O2, O4, O6, or O7, applicants must develop their own aligned measure.
 - O1 Number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving financial literacy services.
 - O2 Number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving job training and other skill development services.
 - O3 Number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving job placement services.
 - O4 Number of housing units developed, repaired, or otherwise made available for low-income individuals, families or people with disabilities.
 - O5 Number of economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, receiving housing placement services.
 - O6 Number of individuals receiving emergency food from food banks, food pantries, or other nonprofit organizations.
 - O7 Number of individuals receiving support, services, education and/or referrals to alleviate long-term hunger.
 - O9 Number of economically disadvantaged individuals with improved financial knowledge.
 - O10 Number of economically disadvantaged individuals placed in jobs.
 - O11 Number of economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing.

Opportunity Measures Related to Creating Greater Opportunity for AmeriCorps Members:

Applicants should only select these measures if part of their approved program design is a focus on helping economically disadvantaged members complete their high school education, attend college, and/or obtain employment.

Applicants must select at least one of the measures (O12-O14) that matches their program model and then the accompanying measure (O15-O17).

- ✓ If selecting Measure O12, then applicant must also select Measure O15.
- ✓ If selecting Measure O13, then applicant must also select Measure O16.
- ✓ If selecting Measure O14, then applicant must also select Measure O17.
 - O12 Number of economically disadvantaged AmeriCorps members who are unemployed prior to their term of service.
 - O13 Number of economically disadvantaged AmeriCorps members who have not obtained their high school diploma or equivalent prior to the start of their term of service.
 - O14 Number of AmeriCorps members who have their high school diploma or equivalent but have not completed a college degree prior to their term of service.
 - O15 Number of economically disadvantaged AmeriCorps members that secure employment during their term of service or within one year after finishing AmeriCorps.
 - O16 Number of members that obtain a GED/diploma while serving in AmeriCorps or within one year after finishing AmeriCorps.
 - O17 Number of members that complete a college course within one year after finishing AmeriCorps.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP FOCUS AREA

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Applicants must select at least one of the measures (EN1-EN6) that matches their program model.

- ✓ Applicants selecting EN1 must also select EN7.
- ✓ Applicants selecting EN2, EN3, EN4, EN5, or EN6 must also develop their own aligned measure.
 - EN1 Number of housing units of low-income households and structures weatherized or retrofitted to significantly improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.
 - EN2 Number of low-income households home and public building energy audits conducted.
 - EN3 Number of students and youth receiving education or training in energy-efficient and environmentally-conscious practices, including but not limited to sustainable energy and other natural resources, and sustainable agriculture.
 - EN4 Number of acres of national parks, state parks, city parks, county parks, or other public lands and tribal communities that are cleaned or improved.
 - EN5 Number of miles of trails or rivers (owned/maintained by national, state, county, city governments or tribal communities) that are cleaned, improved, and/or created.
 - EN6 Number of tons of materials collected and recycled.
 - EN7 Annual energy usage reduction for housing units and structures from weatherizing and retrofiting (in units).

VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES FOCUS AREA

Applicants must select at least one measure (V1-V7) that matches their program model.

Applicants must develop their own aligned measures.

- V1 Number of veterans receiving services and assistance, including veterans with disabilities, veterans who are unemployed, older veterans, and veterans in rural communities.
- V2 Number of veterans engaged in service opportunities (other than mentoring economically disadvantaged students).
- V3 Number of veterans assisted in pursuing educational opportunities.
- V4 Number of veterans assisted in receiving professional certification, licensure, or credentials.
- V5 Number of veterans engaged in mentoring relationships with economically disadvantaged students.
- V6 Number of housing units developed, repaired, or otherwise made available for veterans.
- V7 Number of military families receiving services and assistance.

IX. AGENCY CONTACTS

In Montana, please contact:

Governor's Office of Community Service

PO Box 208001

Helena, MT 59620

Phone: 406-444-9077

Fax: 406-444-4418

Email: serve@mt.gov

Website: <http://serve.mt.gov>

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
 COMMUNITY
 SERVICE** 



Attachment B – Letter of Intent

Montana Commission on Community Service
2011 AmeriCorps State Formula Grant Application

Proposed Program Title: _____

Contact Person: _____

Name of Applicant Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

(Note: to apply all AmeriCorps programs must have access to the Internet)

Federal Employer Identification No (FEIN): _____

Type of Applicant (Nonprofit, Government, etc.): _____

Geographic Area to be Served: _____

Estimated Funds Requested and Total Project Budget: _____ and _____

1: Mission statement for proposed program (500 characters): _____

2: Statement of community needs to be addressed (500 characters): *Note: Please provide/attach supporting data and documentation in addition.* _____

3: Description of program activities (500 characters): _____

4: How will the proposed program address the Montana expectations for AmeriCorps Programs listed below? (500 characters): _____

Montana Expectations:

- ✓ Disability inclusion in the design and delivery of the program
- ✓ A collaborative approach to program planning, design and delivery
- ✓ Demonstrated ability to successfully administer an AmeriCorps or other federal grant
- ✓ Addressing rural, underserved or areas of extreme poverty not currently served by AmeriCorps programs



5: Indicate the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) Focus Area(s) to be addressed by the proposed program?

CNCS Focus Areas:

- ☐ Disaster Services
- ☐ Economic Opportunity
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Environmental Stewardship
- ☐ Healthy Futures
- ☐ Veterans and Military Families

6: If the proposed program addresses Montana Initiative(s) please indicate.

Montana Initiatives:

- ☐ The Governor's Strategic Initiative for Clean Energy
- ☐ The Governor and First Lady's Strategic Initiative for Math and Science Education
- ☐ Expand and Promote Volunteerism in Montana

AmeriCorps Members

How many Members will be active under the proposed program?

_____ Full Time
(1700 hrs)

_____ Half Time
(900 hrs)

_____ Reduced Half Time
(675 hrs)

_____ Quarter Time
(450 hrs)

_____ Minimum Time
(300 hours)

_____ Total

New AmeriCorps State Applicants: Please submit a completed Letter of Intent with the Readiness Self-Assessment (Attachment C) to the Governor's Office of Community Service by March 16, 2011 at 5pm MST in order to be eligible for a 2011 AmeriCorps Grant. Documents should be submitted electronically to serve@mt.gov.

Thank you for your interest, we look forward to reviewing your proposal!



Attachment C – Readiness Self-Assessment (New Applicants)

Montana Commission on Community Service 2011 AmeriCorps State Formula Grant Application

Is My Organization Ready to Apply for an AmeriCorps Grant?

This Readiness Assessment asks simple questions to help you determine whether your organization is poised to successfully apply for and implement an AmeriCorps grant. Read each question carefully and answer honestly. This assessment is a tool to help you plan for the implementation and administration of an AmeriCorps grant-funded program.

Completion of the assessment does not guarantee AmeriCorps funding through the Governor's Office of Community Service (OCS) or the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

The Readiness Self-Assessment will be used by the Governor's Office of Community Service to determine if the organization is financially ready for an AmeriCorps Grant.

Fundamental Questions:

Is your organization a public or private nonprofit organization - including labor organizations, faith-based and other community organizations; an institution of higher education; a government entity within the State of Montana; an Indian Tribe; or a partnership or consortia?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Does your organization's plan for utilizing AmeriCorps members address specific unmet community needs in the areas of education, healthy futures, environmental stewardship, veterans, economic opportunity, and/or disaster services?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

If the answer to either of the above questions is "No" then your organization would not be eligible to receive an AmeriCorps grant or serve as a Host Site for AmeriCorps members.

Additionally you are ineligible if your organization is a 501 (c)(4) non-profit entity [under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501 (c)(4)] that engages in lobbying.



Do your plans for utilizing AmeriCorps members call for members to provide service exclusively within the state of Montana?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

If the answer to the above question is "No" then your program would not be eligible to receive funding through the Montana Governor's Office of Community Service. If the rest of the self-assessment is favorable, then your organization may be interested in applying directly to the Corporation for National and Community Service for an AmeriCorps National Direct grant. If your organization does apply directly to the Corporation for National and Community Service please contact the Governor's Office of Community Service for more information on submitting a multi-state/national consultation form.

Administrative Competencies:

Does your organization have a proven track record of establishing measurable outcomes for its programs?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Does your organization have the infrastructure to recruit, train, and support the efforts of AmeriCorps members? Variables include office space, technology, supervisory time & skill, financial expertise, and the ability to manage volunteers.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Has your organization previously managed a major federal, state, or foundation grant?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, attach grant numbers for the past two years.

Does your organization have formal internal controls governing all financial operations?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Does your organization have sufficient cash on hand or credit to operate a major grant on a reimbursement basis? Both the Federal and State governments rarely, if ever, pay grant funds in advance.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Has your organization been audited by a Certified Public Accounting firm within the past two years?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, attach a copy of your most recent audit report.

If you answered "No" to any of the above questions, it is likely your organization would struggle to successfully administer an AmeriCorps grant. Consideration should be given to seeking a partnership with an existing AmeriCorps program in Montana. Serving as an AmeriCorps host site rather than as a primary grant applicant is often a better option for smaller organizations. Contact the Governor's Office of Community Service for more details.



Mission Statement:

1. Does your organization have a clear written mission statement? (if no, skip to question 6)
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
2. Do all organizational programs and efforts align with the mission?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
3. Has your organization said no to potentially good opportunities which are not consistent with the organization's mission?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
4. Is the mission understood by all stakeholders within the organization?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
5. Is the mission frequently referred to (e.g. in planning sessions and other meetings)?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Governance & Operations:

6. Does your organization have an active and independent board of directors and/or other governing body? (Independent is defined as a majority of board members who are neither employees of the organization nor family members of employees or other board members.)
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
7. Does the organization have written policies and procedures, including a conflict of interest policy for employees and directors?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
8. Does your organization plan to use existing staff to manage the AmeriCorps program?
☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, which position(s)? _____

Strategic Planning:

9. Does your organization have a clear and coherent written strategic plan for the future i.e. 3-10 year strategic plan? (if no, skip to question 13)
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
10. Does the strategic plan have well defined measurable goals and achievable action steps with timeframes?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
11. Are the goals in the strategic plan well known and understood by the staff and board?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure



12. Is the strategic plan made actionable by realistic and detailed annual plans that outline the specific work to be accomplished?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

13. Is this annual plan consistently used at all levels of the organization to guide operations?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

14. Does the organization conduct regular assessment of internal operations to assess efficiency and effectiveness?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Financial Management:

15. Do you have a "job cost" or "fund based" accounting system?

☐ Yes ☐ No Current system used: _____

16. If your organization uses accrual basis accounting, are there procedures in place to allow for reconciliation between cash and accrual basis reports?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

17. Is your organization's accounting system manual, automated, or a combination?

☐ Manual ☐ Automated ☐ Combination

18. Are entries posted to the general ledger?

☐ Daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly

☐ Unsure

☐ Other (Please describe): _____

19. Does the accounting system track completely and accurately the receipt and disbursement of funds by each grant or funding source?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

20. Does your accounting system allow cash basis reporting and for the recording of "in-kind" contributions?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

21. Does the organization have a development/fundraising plan in place?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

22. Does the organization have plans to secure the financial and in-kind resources to meet required matches?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

23. Is your organization familiar with federal cost principles?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure



24. Is your organization familiar with procedures for the determination and allowance of costs in connection with Corporation for National and Community Service grants and contracts?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Technology:

25. Does every key staff member have access to a computer with up-to-date software, internet access, and e-mail capabilities?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

26. Are all staff competent and comfortable using their computers?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

27. Are all staff able to find and use resources posted online?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Human Resources:

28. Does your organization have a well-planned process to recruit, develop, and retain the best employees in accordance with an equal opportunity environment?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

29. Does your organization provide staff and volunteers with written job descriptions and the necessary resources to carry out duties appropriately?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

30. Are time and activity distribution records (time sheets) maintained by funding source and project type for each employee to account for total hours with your organization?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

31. Does the organization provide relevant and regular training for staff and board members?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

32. Are employee performance appraisals conducted on a consistent and fair basis?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

33. Does your organization have a well-planned process to recruit, develop, and retain volunteers?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure



Internal Controls:

34. Are the duties of the bookkeeper and record keeper separate from cash functions (receipts, deposits, check signing/releasing)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

35. Are checks signed by individual(s) whose duties exclude recording cash received, approving vouchers for payment, and the preparation of payroll?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

36. Are purchase approval methods documented and communicated?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

37. Are employee payroll reports supported by appropriately signed documentation (timesheets, leave slips, etc.)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

38. Are employees who handle funds bonded against loss by reasons of fraud or dishonesty?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Organizational Needs Assessment and Implementation:

39. Does your organization conduct regular community needs assessments?

☐ Yes ☐ No Date Last Conducted: _____

40. Does your organization analyze and use the results of needs assessments to chart change?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

41. Does your organization have the ability to grow and/or create new and innovative programs to meet the needs of the community?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

42. Are your organization's programs and services well defined?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

43. Does your organization have the ability to close a program that is no longer needed or relevant?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Measuring Performance and Continual Improvement of Programs:

44. Does your organization have a comprehensive well-developed community assessment or evaluation system used to measure the impact of programs and services?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure



45. Does your organization conduct regular community assessments of existing programs' effectiveness in meeting recipient needs and identify areas for improvement?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

46. Does your organization collect data to measure performance and progress on a continual basis?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

47. Is data analyzed, used in program redesign and communicated to stakeholders on a regular basis? (e.g. annual report)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Partnership and Collaboration:

48. Does your organization participate in partnerships with other groups?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

49. Have these relationships led to mutually beneficial collaborations?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Faith Based Organizations:

If the conditions below are not acceptable to your organization, Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) funding is probably not a good option:

- ✓ Participation in CNCS funded programs must be open to all who qualify, without regard to religious beliefs
- ✓ CNCS funded programs cannot require members or participants to engage in religious activities
- ✓ CNCS funded positions must not proselytize
- ✓ CNCS funded programs must be held in a separate place or time from religious activities

New AmeriCorps State applicants: Please submit a completed Readiness Self-Assessment with the Letter of Intent (Attachment B) to the Governor's Office of Community Service by March 16, 2011 at 5pm MST in order to be eligible for a 2011 AmeriCorps Grant. Documents should be submitted electronically to serve@mt.gov.



Attachment D – Cover Letter

Montana Commission on Community Service
2011 AmeriCorps State Formula Grant Application

Proposed Program Title: _____

Contact Person: _____

Name of Applicant Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail Address: _____

(Note: to apply all AmeriCorps programs must have access to the Internet)

Federal Employer Identification No (FEIN): _____

Type of Applicant (Nonprofit, Government, etc.): _____

Geographic Area to be Served: _____

Funds Requested and Total Project Budget: _____ and _____

1: One-paragraph summary of your proposed program (500 characters): _____

2: In your Letter of Intent (Attachment B) you selected Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) Focus Area(s), describe how your program will address these issue areas (1500 Characters): _____

3: In your Letter of Intent (Attachment B) you may have selected Montana Initiative(s), describe how your program will address these issue areas (1500 Characters): *Note: The Grant Review Workgroup uses this information in making final ranking and funding recommendations.* _____

Indirect Cost Rate: Applicants that include a federally-approved indirect cost rate amount in their budget must submit an approved indirect cost rate agreement to the Governor's Office of Community Service with the Cover Letter and Application.

Continuing Applications Only: Describe the successes and highlights of your program over the past grant year (1500 Characters): _____

**AmeriCorps Members**

How many Members will be active under the proposed program?

_____ Full Time
(1700 hrs)

_____ Half Time
(900 hrs)

_____ Reduced Half Time
(675 hrs)

_____ Quarter Time
(450 hrs)

_____ Minimum Time
(300 hours)

_____ Total

Please submit a completed Cover Letter with the Full Application to the Governor's Office of Community Service by April 27, 2011 at 5pm MST in order to be eligible for a 2011 AmeriCorps Grant. The Cover Letter should be submitted electronically to serve@mt.gov and the Full Application in Grants.

Thank you for your interest, we look forward to reviewing your proposal!

